

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for obtaining an account balance of a wireless communication account, said wireless communication account associated with an account identifier, comprising:
 - associating a handset identifier with said wireless communication account;
 - transmitting a first message to an account maintenance system in response to a user selection of a predetermined handset key, said first message comprising at least said handset identifier and said account identifier; and
 - a handset associated with the handset identifier obtaining said account balance by receiving a second message, the second message providing an account balance for the wireless communication account associated with said account identifier, the second message provided without requiring the user to add value to the account.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said transmitting a first message comprises:
 - enabling a soft key from a plurality of handset keys for replenishment of an account;
 - associating said account identifier with said soft key;
 - associating a null amount with said soft key; and
 - said transmitting of said first message being in response to a user selection of said soft key, said first message comprising a null amount, said account identifier, and said handset identifier.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said first message further comprises payment account data.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said second message is an SMS message.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined handset key is a directional key.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the wireless communication account is a prepaid telephone account.

7. (New) A method for obtaining an account balance of a wireless communication account, the method comprising:

receiving at a handset associated with the wireless communication account a user selection, the user selection resulting from a single keystroke and indicating a user's request for an account balance associated with the wireless communication account;

responsive to the user selection, transmitting a balance inquiry message to an account maintenance system, the balance inquiry message identifying the wireless communication account;

receiving at the handset a message from the account maintenance system, the message containing the account balance associated with the wireless communication account; and

displaying the account balance on a display of the handset.

8. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the message received from the account maintenance system is an SMS message.

9. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the user selection is made available via a soft key on the handset.

10. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the user selection is made available in response to a low balance condition associated with the wireless communication account.

11. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the wireless communication account is a prepaid telephone account.